

# SO-CALLED ‘FIRST CONJUNCT’ AGREEMENT IN BIBLICAL HEBREW\*

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## 0. Introduction

Clauses lacking full agreement (FA) between the subject and the verb in biblical Hebrew (BH) have been largely been investigated within the context of traditional grammar and, more recently, discourse studies. The syntax of partial agreement (PA) and first-conjunct agreement (FCA), however, has not been fully addressed. Certain features of BH agreement asymmetries have been discussed in Levi 1987, Revell 1993, Naudé 1999 and Doron 2000, but many issues remain unresolved. In this paper I will focus on FCA, that is, the cases in which verbal morphology matches only the first conjunct in a conjoined subject. I will present the BH data that appear to reflect FCA, compare it to the standard Arabic (SA) phenomenon of a subject-verb (SV)/verb-subject (VS) alternation that corresponds to full or first-conjunct agreement, and argue that FCA in BH is a perceived rather than real syntactic phenomenon.

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\* I am indebted to Abdel-Khalig Ali, Sebastian Gunther, Michael Carter, and Usama Soltan for clarifying a number of issues regarding the Arabic data; I am also appreciative of the feedback provided by Elizabeth Cowper, Edit Doron, and Janne Bondi Johannessen. All opinion and any errors are solely my responsibility.

## 1. The Data<sup>1</sup>

BH and SA are languages that exhibit rich inflectional morphology on the verb, and typically the verb's inflectional features agree with its syntactic subject in person, gender, and number, as we see in the SA and BH examples in (1a) and (1b), respectively.

- (1) a. *ʔal-ʔawlaxd-u*                      *qaraʔ-ur*    *l-qis's'a*  
          the-children-MP.NOM              read-3MP    the-story  
          'the children read the story'
- b. *har-ʔāna:f-im*                      *raxdp-ur*<sup>2</sup>  
          the-men-MP                      fled-3MP  
          'the men fled' (Josh. 2:7)

However, despite this rich verbal morphology we also see examples that exhibit agreement asymmetries. In SA we typically find that the verb in VS clauses exhibits agreement in person and gender but not number, as in the PA example in (2a). Similarly, in BH we occasionally see PA, as in (2b), where we see agreement in person and number but not gender.

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<sup>1</sup> A note on BH data: I do not claim that my lists of examples are exhaustive for the Hebrew Bible but simply that the weight of evidence indicates that each type is represented sufficiently for drawing conclusions. The collection of data was especially aided by using the Andersen-Forbes database by Logos Software, although the search results had to be winnowed due to numerous irrelevant hits.

<sup>2</sup> A note on BH transcription and inter-linear morphological glossing: I do not mark any spirantization that is indicated by the Masoretic diacritic tradition in the Leningrad Codex; I use the reconstructed vocalization recommended by the SBL Handbook of Style, but set within the IPA conventions; finally, I only indicate nominal morphology (e.g., MP or FS endings) on items that are relevant to the agreement issues being discussed.

- (2) a. *qaraʔ-a ʔal-ʔawlād-u l-qis's'a*  
 read-3MS the-children-MP.NOM the-story  
 ‘the children read the story’
- b. *bə-ʕēbrat yhwh s'əbaʔot nēʕtam ʔares'*  
 in-wrath.of Yhwh.of hosts burned.3MS land.3FS  
 ‘through the wrath of Yhwh of Hosts the land was burned’ (Isa 9:18)

The SA and BH examples in (2) represent one of two primary agreement configurations. The first configuration involves simple subjects, which may precede or follow the verb (3a-b), and the second involves conjoined subjects, which also may precede or follow the verb (3c-d).<sup>3</sup>

- (3) a. NP V  
 b. V NP  
 c. NP<sub>1</sub> and NP<sub>2</sub> V  
 d. V NP<sub>1</sub> and NP<sub>2</sub>

The SA examples in (1) and (2) fit the first category. The word order and agreement correlation, where SV clauses (1a) show FA and VS clauses show PA, is normal in SA. In contrast, the overwhelming number of both SV and VS clauses in BH exhibit FA, as (4a), repeated from (1b), and (4b) illustrate, respectively.

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<sup>3</sup> I have not included in this study examples with imperatival or participial predicates. Additionally, I discuss below only briefly the features of constructions with subject pronouns in these agreement configurations; Levi 1987, Revell 1993, and Naudé 1999 each provide distinct analyses for the pronominal data and I intend to address their proposals more fully in a future study.

(4) a. *ha-ʔānaʃ-im raḏp-u*

the-men-MP fled-3MP

‘the men fled’ (Josh. 2:7 )

b. *ye-lk-u ʃābaḏ-ay ʃim ʃāba:der-ka boʔōni-ot*

3M-go.juss-P servants.MP-my with servants.MP-your on.the-ships-FP

‘let my servants go with your servants on the ships’ (1 Kgs 22:50)

Although BH also exhibits PA in a small number of clauses, as we saw in (2b),<sup>4</sup> I will not include them in this study; rather, I will focus on the second agreement configuration, in which the subject is conjoined, schematized in (3c-d).

As with the PA examples, SA exhibits a word order influenced agreement pattern: SV clauses with conjoined subjects require FA, whereas VS clauses with conjoined subjects allow agreement with only the first conjunct (see, among others, Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche 1994). Consider the illustrative examples in (5):

(5) a. *ʃumar wa ʃaliyaʔ qaraʔ-a l-qis’s’a*

Omar and Alia read-3DU the-story

‘Omar and Alia read the story’

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<sup>4</sup> For lack of gender agreement in SV clauses (i.e., feminine, non-conjoined S, masculine V), see Gen 2:23; 6:1; 15:17; 49:22; Exod 13:7; 15:5; 28:32; Num 28:17; 1 Kgs 20:27; Ezek 45:21; Mic 6:9; Pss 98:8; 104:17, 26; 124:4; Job 28:2; Prov 14:9; Dan 11:41, 44; 1 Chr 2:3; 3:4. For lack of number agreement in VS clauses (i.e., singular V, plural, non-conjoined S), see Gen 1:14; 10:25; Josh 11:22; Judg 8:6; 1 Sam 13:19 (Kt; Qr = plural); 1 Kgs 22:13 (Kt); Isa 13:22; Ps 57:2; Job 5:5; Prov 20:30; Neh 9:4; 1 Chr 26:31. For lack of gender agreement in VS clauses (i.e., masculine V, feminine, non-conjoined S), see Gen 1:14; Exod 31:15; Lev 11:32; 1 Sam 25:20; 2 Kgs 3:18; 13:20; Isa 9:18; 14:11; 17:3; 18:5; 66:8; Ezek 27:28; 28:15; Pss 57:2; 77:17; 93:3c; Prov 12:27; Qoh 11:2; 2 Chr 20:37. For lack of number agreement in SV clauses (i.e., plural S, singular V), see Gen 49:22; Exod 13:7; Lev 6:9; Num 28:17; Ezek 24:12; 45:21; Ps 98:1; Prov 9:1; 14:9; 2 Chr 3:3.

- b. *qaraʔa ʕumar wa ʕaliyaʔ l-qis's'a*  
 read.3MS Omar and Alia the-story  
 ‘Omar and Alia read the story’
- c. *qaraʔa-t ʕaliyaʔ wa ʕumar l-qis's'a*  
 read-3FS Alia and Omar the-story  
 ‘Alia and Omar read the story’

The SA example in (5a) shows the requirement for FA in SV clauses. But when a conjoined subject follows the verb, as in (5b-c), the verb may exhibit agreement features matching only those of the first NP of the subject. This is not a common occurrence in BH, though; full agreement is the the norm, whether SV (6a) or VS (6b).

- (6) a. *moʕse və-ʔahäron ʕas-ʔet kol ham-moʕtim ha-ʔelle*  
 Moses and-Aaron did-3C<sup>5</sup>P ACC all.of the-wonders the-these  
 ‘Moses and Aaron did all these wonders’ (Exod 11:10)
- b. *va-y-yi-rdp-ʔ yo:ʔab va-ʔäbiʕay ʔaxäre: ʔabner*  
 and-C<sup>6</sup>-3M-pursued-P Joab and-Abishai after Abner  
 ‘and Joab and Abishai pursued Abner’ (2 Sam 2:24)

Even so, we do find cases of what appear to be FCA, as in (7).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The c in the verbal agreement feature glossing stands for “common” (i.e., for verbs whose gender features do not distinguish between masculine and feminine).

<sup>6</sup> The C (complementizer) in this “past narrative” verb form has assimilated to the initial consonant of the prefix verb to which it is attached. See n. 16, below, for further discussion.

<sup>7</sup> For VS “FCA” examples, see Gen 3:8; 7:21; 9:23; 11:29; 13:5; 14:5, 8; 17:13, 26; 21:22, 32; 23:20; 24:50, 55, 61; 25:10; 31:14; 33:7 (2x); 34:20; 36:2; 44:14; 46:1, 12; 47:13;

- (7) *va-t-tə-dabber miryam və-ʔahāro:n bə-moʔe:*  
 and-C-3F-spoke.s Miriam and-Aaron against-Moses  
 ‘and Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses’ (Num 12:1)

The BH example in (7) appears similar to the sort of FCA in VS clauses that SA exhibits (5b-c). Yet the situation is much more complex in BH than in SA, because BH also exhibits SV with apparent FCA, as we see in (8a) and (8b),<sup>8</sup>

- (8) a. *yo:ʔab va-ʔābiʔay ʔax-iv raʔdap*  
 Joab and-Abishai brother-his pursued.3MS

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Exod 1:6; 4:29; 7:6, 10; 8:8; 9:24, 34; 10:3; 14:20; 15:1, 16; 16:6-7; 18:5, 12, 18; 19:16; 23:12 (2x), 26; 24:9, 13; 27:21; 29:10, 19, 32, 34; 34:30; 36:1; Lev 8:14, 36; 9:23; 20:10; 25:33; Num 1:17, 44; 3:4 (2x), 39; 4:5, 15, 34-35, 37, 41, 45, 46; 8:20; 12:1; 14:5; 16:1-2; 17:8; 20:6, 11, 28; 23:2; 26:3-4, 19, 61; 31:31, 51, 54; 32:25-27; Deut 4:46; 5:14; 13:3; 14:29; 21:5; 22:15; 23:2, 4; 25:13, 14; 27:1, 9-10; 29:6, 19; 31:14; Josh 8:3; 12:7; 13:13; 22:30, 32; Judg 5:1-2; 6:3; 7:19; 8:21; 9:26, 34, 35; 14:3, 5; 1 Sam 1:21; 13:22; 14:14, 20; 15:9; 17:11, 21, 23-24, 34; 18:3; 22:3, 6; 23:5, 13, 25; 26:7; 27:8; 30:3, 4; 31:6; 2 Sam 1:5, 11; 2:12, 17; 5:6; 6:2; 7:16; 10:13; 12:2, 31; 15:16, 17, 22, 29; 16:13, 14, 18; 17:14, 22, 26; 21:15; 24:4; 1 Kgs 1:34, 38; 1:41; 5:5; 6:35; 12:3 (Qr), 12; 16:17; 22:29; 2 Kgs 2:1; 3:9; 9:21; 10:5, 23; 12:11; 16:5; 18:18 (= Isa 36:3), 26, 37; 22:14; 23:2; Isa 5:6, 12, 14; 7:1, 2; 10:14; 15:4; 16:10; 19:15; 23:18; 29:2; 31:4; 34:1, 13; 36:11, 22; 39:8; 55:10; 60:18; 66:22; Jer 4:9; 12:4; 15:1; 25:36; 26:21; 31:13; 38:1-2; 39:1, 13; 41:2, 11, 16; 42:18; 43:2, 4, 5; 44:14; 48:7, 33; 49:10; 49:23; 50:28; Ezek 23:29; 45:17; 48:21; Hos 7:1; Joel 1:9; Nah 1:4; Haggai 1:12; Zech 12:7; Pss 73:26; 96:11, 12; 98:7; 105:34; Job 42:13; Prov 22:10; 23:25; Qoh 12:2; Lam 3:38; 4:12; Esth 2:21; 5:4, 5, 8; 6:3; 7:1; 8:16; 9:1, 29, 31; Ezra 3:2, 9; 8:20, 33; Neh 2:10, 19; Neh 3:1, 11; Neh 3:13, 23, 30; 4:1; 6:1-2; 8:9; 1 Chr 2:23; 9:22; 10:6; 11:4; 13:6; 15:25; 16:32 (2x); 19:6, 14; 20:3; 24:2; 25:1; 26:26; 2 Chr 7:8; 10:3, 12; 14:12; 18:28; 20:25; 24:11, 12; 29:30, 36; 30:2; 32:20; 34:22, 30; 35:18.

<sup>8</sup> For SV “FCA” examples, see Gen 9:2; 35:11; Exod 9:31; 10:24; 21:4; Lev 7:24; 11:35, 36; Num 11:22; 15:16; 19:14; Deut 8:13, 17; 12:15; 20:10; 2 Kgs 20:19; Isa 32:14; 48:5; 51:3; Jer 5:30; 6:7; 49:24; Ezek 5:17; 7:15; 40:21; 45:5, 10; Hos 10:8; Hab 1:7; 3:11; Zech 8:19; Pss 55:6; 87:5; Prov 23:21; 27:9; 29:15; Qoh 9:11; Esth 4:3, 14; Neh 6:12.

*ʔaxäre:    ʃebaʃ        ben        bikri:*  
 after        Sheba        son.of    Bikri

‘Joab and Abishai, his brother, pursued Sheba son of Bikri’ (2 Sam 20:10)

b. *ha-ʔiff-a:        v-ilad-e-ha:        ti-hye:        la-ʔdome-ha:*  
 the-woman-3FS    and-children-MP-her    3F-will.be.s    to-master-her  
 ‘the woman and her children shall belong to her master’ (Exod 21:4)

While the agreement issues of SA, illustrated in (1a), (2a), and (5), have been studied at length,<sup>9</sup> the diversity of the BH data in (7)-(8) has not been addressed adequately. In the next section I will review the few proposals that have been offered.

## 2. Previous Analyses of BH Agreement Asymmetries<sup>10</sup>

Reference grammars for BH consistently note that full agreement between the subject and verb is sometimes lacking, particularly in VS clauses, but beyond this they offer little more than a list of occurrences and *ad hoc* explanations, such as the suggestion that when a feminine plural subject has a masculine verb it reflects “the dislike” of using the third person feminine plural verb (GKC §145p; see WOC §6.6c; JM §150; BHRG §35). Serious attention to the syntax of agreement asymmetries in BH has been lacking due to a simple statistical fact: in contrast to the common

<sup>9</sup> See, among others, Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche 1994, 1999, Johannessen 1996, Munn 1999, Soltan 2006. See also Camacho 2003:113-16 for a summary of the three current proposals for dealing with agreement asymmetries, followed by his own, in which he distinguishes between what he calls PF and LF agreement types.

<sup>10</sup> Note that I do not include in this study the uncontroversial cases in which the semantic gender of a noun rather than its morphologically marked gender is the identified by the verb for agreement, nor when a singular noun is used collectively and thus takes a plural verb (see GKC §145; WOC §6.6b; JM §150e-g; BHRG §35).

occurrence of the VS partial and first-conjunct agreement configurations in SA, the BH corpus produces a clause lacking full agreement in less than one out of every twenty-five clauses, or approximately four percent of the time.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, most of the lack of agreement cases in the Hebrew Bible are of the type illustrated in (9):

- (9) *va-y-ya-šaś mo:fe: və-ʔahāro:n ka-ʔāšer s'ivva: yhwḥ ʔot-am*  
 and-C-3M-did.s Moses and-Aaron like-REL commanded.3MS Yhwḥ ACC-them  
 ‘and Moses and Aaron did just as Yhwḥ had commanded them’ (Exod 7.6)

Typical analyses of such examples provide explanations based on the discourse “importance” of the first agent so that the verbal agreement features alert the reader to the more important of the two subject nouns. Revell, in his nuanced study of some of these agreement issues, asserts that conjoined subjects are of the “principal and adjunct” type, which he explains as the case in which the “initial component represents the principal actor; other components represent less important associates” (1993:72). Thus, a “singular verb is typically used before a compound subject in narrative contexts in which the singular component of the compound, the ‘principal’ is the main focus of the narrator’s attention” (75).

It is quite possible that a complete analysis of many, if not most, of the agreement asymmetries in the Hebrew Bible would require a discourse component, such as Revell 1993 provides. My first concern in this study, however, is the syntax of the BH data: how are the apparent examples of FCA licensed within the syntax of BH, particularly within the framework of Chomsky’s minimalist program within the

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<sup>11</sup> This number is based on the approximation of 12,000 clauses in the Hebrew Bible and something more than 400 cases of partial or seemingly first-conjunct agreement that I have collected. Moreshet 1967 lists 94 cases of lack of full verb agreement with compound subjects; he includes 29 exceptions (which is a 1:3 ratio) but elsewhere asserts that the ration of exceptions (i.e., full agreement) to lack of full agreement is 1:6 (he accounts for the exceptions by structural rules [see discussion of Doron 2000 below] or stylistic diversity). Revell identifies 117 cases of “[A singular] verb preceding a compound subject” in the corpus of Judges, Samuel, and Kings (1993:73).



principles and parameters linguistic theory.<sup>12</sup> Two such studies exist, Doron 2000 and Naudé 1999, which I will now consider.

Doron compares BH and IH and argues that the two deal with agreement in VS clauses in distinct ways. First, she adduces IH examples like those give in (10).

(10) Modern Israeli Hebrew

- a. *\*yi-qax fem və-yefet ?et ha-šimla*  
 3M-will.take.s Shem and-Japheth ACC the-garment  
 \*‘Shem and Japheth will take the garment’
- b. *\*yi-qx-u fem və-yefet ?et ha-šimla*  
 3M-will.take-P Shem and-Japheth ACC the-garment  
 \*‘Shem and Japheth will take the garment’
- c. *\*maxar yi-qax fem və-yefet ?et ha-šimla*  
 tomorrow 3M-will.take.s Shem and-Japheth ACC the-garment  
 \*‘Shem and Japheth will take the garment tomorrow’
- d. *maxar yi-qx-u fem və-yefet ?et ha-šimla*  
 tomorrow 3M-will.take-P Shem and-Japheth ACC the-garment  
 ‘Shem and Japheth will take the garment tomorrow’
- e. *hay-ta li sifriy-a ve-xadar maxfevim*  
 was-3FS to-me library-FS and-room.MS.of computers  
 ‘I had a library and a terminal room’

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<sup>12</sup> I intend to address the explanations given in Levi 1987 and Revell 1993, which are non-generative and primarily discourse-based, in a future study.

- f. *ʔʔhay-u li sifriy-a ve-xadar maxfevim*  
 was-3P to-me library-FS and-room.MS.of computers  
 ‘I had a library and a terminal room’

Regarding the first four examples she notes that IH does not allow VS sequences without some preverbal constituent (10a-b), and then even when a preverbal constituent, such as ‘tomorrow’, is present in a VS clause (10c-d), full subject-verb agreement is required (10d). According to Doron, it is only in expletive construction that IH allows—even prefers—FCA, as the contrast between the FCA examples in (10e) and the full agreement example in (10f) illustrates. This situation as a whole does not obtain in BH (see below, section four, for more on the expletive construction in BH), and Doron marshals examples similar to those already presented above in (1-2) and (4-6).

(11) Biblical Hebrew

- a. *va-y-yi-qqax ʃem va-yepeʔ ʔet haš-šimlaʔ*  
 and-C-3M-took.s Shem and-Japheth ACC the-garment  
 ‘and Shem and Japheth took the garment’ (Gen 9:23)
- b. *va-y-yi-qqax ʔabram və-naʔxo:r la-hem naʕʕim*  
 and-C-3M-took.s Abram and-Nahor to-them wives  
 ‘and Abraham and Nahor took wives for themselves’ (Gen 11:29)
- c. *va-y-yi-ššaʔ david və-ha-ʕam ʔäʕer ʔitt-o: ʔet qo:l-am*  
 and-C-3M-lifted.s David and-the-people that with-him  
 ACC voice-their  
 ‘and David and the people that where with him lifted their voice’ (1 Sam 30:4)

Example (11a) provides the contrast for the IH examples in (10a-d), while (11b-c) provide critical syntactic clues to the nature of the BH phenomenon: in (11b) the anaphor bound to the subject, ‘for themselves’, is plural, and in (11c) the idiom ‘X lifted up X’s voice’ is obligatorily reflexive and the possessive suffix on ‘their voice’

is plural. Both of these facts suggest to Doron that the subject must be plural as well (she uses the licensing of plural anaphora to argue against the clausal conjunction analysis of FCA proposed in Aoun, Benmamoun, Sportiche 1994).<sup>13</sup> Doron draws two primary descriptive conclusions from these BH and IH data. First, in IH “the verb is always preceded by some constituent, not necessarily the subject” (2000:92), whereas BH allows verb-first clauses. Second, in IH “there is no left-conjunct agreement when the subject follows the verb, other than in expletive constructions,” whereas BH appears to allow this. She reduces these two difference to a single factor: the nature of the extended projection principle (EPP).<sup>14</sup> Specifically, she concludes that

T in Modern Hebrew is assigned the EPP feature lexically (as in English). In Biblical Hebrew, it is not, but T may be enriched with an EPP feature as part of some derivations but not of others (the same is true of Arabic, Greek, and Romance). (2000:92-93)

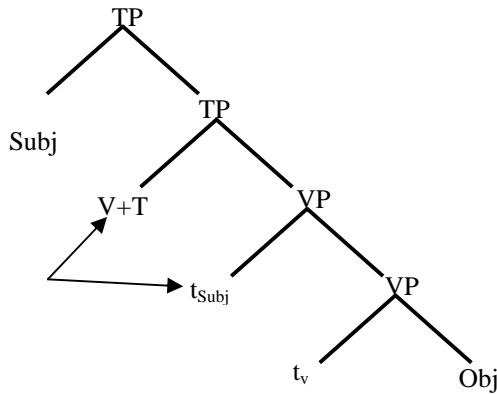
Thus, Doron proposes the structure in (11) for SVO clauses.

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<sup>13</sup> Doron highlights the fact that RNR constituents in Standard Arabic, Irish, and BH may contain plural anaphors instead of only the singular anaphors as empirical evidence against the clausal conjunction analysis of Aoun, Benmamoun, Sportiche 1994 (2000:85-86; see the SA FCA example with a reciprocal cited in Munn 1999:648, n. 6; see also the discussion in Camacho 2003, chp. 4). Such examples are briefly addressed in Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche 1999, where it is asserted that they can be incorporated into a clausal conjunction analysis à la Aoun, Benmamoun, Sportiche 1994.

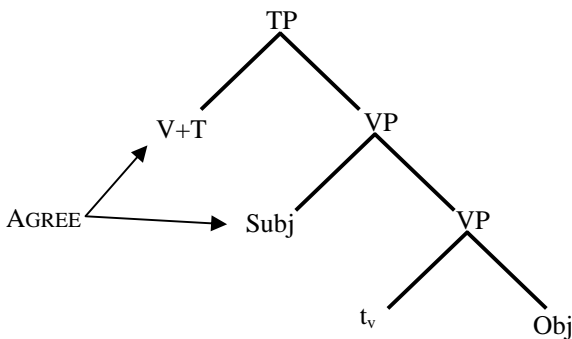
<sup>14</sup> The Extended Projection Principle: “All clauses must have subjects. Lexical information is syntactically represented” (Carnie 2002:175).

(11) SVO in BH and IH (Doron 2000, ex. [29], as in [4a] above)



When an EPP feature is associated with T, obligatorily for IH and optionally for BH, not only does the verb raise to T (V-to-T movement) to satisfy the features of T, the subject DP also raises to the Specifier of TP to satisfy the EPP. In contrast, when the EPP is not associated with T in BH, the result is the structure Doron proposes in (12).

(12) VSO in BH (Doron 2000, ex. [28], as in [4b] above)



In BH clauses with a VSO structure like that in (12), the verb has raised to T while the subject DP remains in the specifier of some lower head (Doron assumes for the sake of simplicity that it is Spec,VP).<sup>15</sup> According to Doron, in these VSO clauses there is no EPP feature, which explains why the subject has not raised to the specifier of T. It is important to note that in both the SVO and VSO clause types Doron takes the operation AGREE<sup>16</sup> to apply between T and the closest D.

Doron similarly accounts for the conjoined subject data from BH, illustrated in (13)-(14). First consider her account for SV clauses with conjoined subjects.

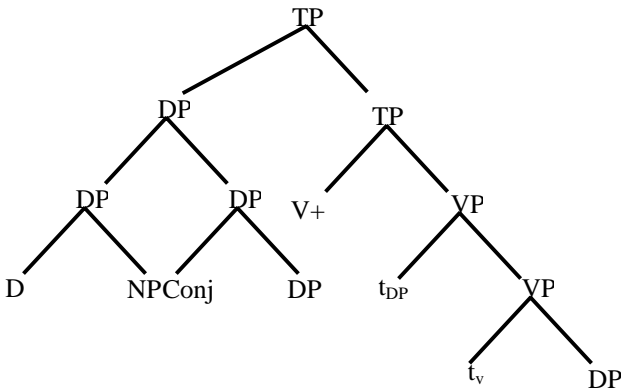
When T has an EPP that is not satisfied with the merging of an expletive in BH (see below, ex. [27]), the EPP motivates the raising of the nearest D, which is actually the entire conjoined DP. Thus, the result is full agreement between the conjoined subject and the verb. However, when the EPP feature is lacking or it can be satisfied with the merging of an expletive, there is no D-raising and the AGREE relation holds with the closest D head, which remains in the lower position, as in (14).

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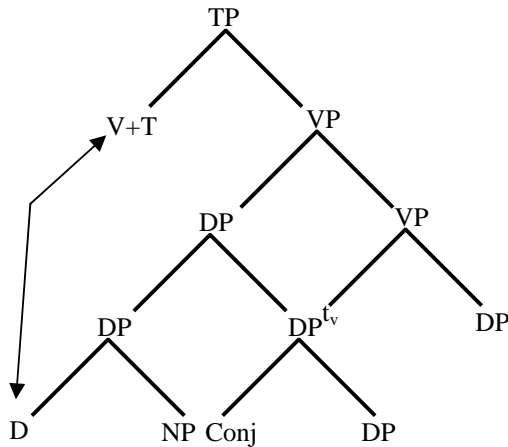
<sup>15</sup> Doron takes a V-raising account of VSO order for both BH and IH, citing cases where the verb is located to the left of sentential adverbs (2000:82-83); Holmstedt 2002 also advocates V-to-T movement for BH (172f.).

<sup>16</sup> “The empirical facts make it clear that there are (LF-)uninterpretable inflectional features that enter into agreement relations with interpretable inflectional features. Thus, the  $\phi$ -features of T (Tense) are uninterpretable and agree with the interpretable  $\phi$ -features of a nominal that may be local or remote, yielding the surface effect of noun-verb agreement....We therefore have a relation Agree holding between  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , where  $\alpha$  has interpretable inflectional features and  $\beta$  has uninterpretable ones, which delete under Agree.” (Chomsky 2001:3)

- (13) SVO with conjoined subjects (= full agreement, as in [6a] above)



- (14) FCA in BH VSO (Doron 2000, ex. [30], modified, as in [9] above)

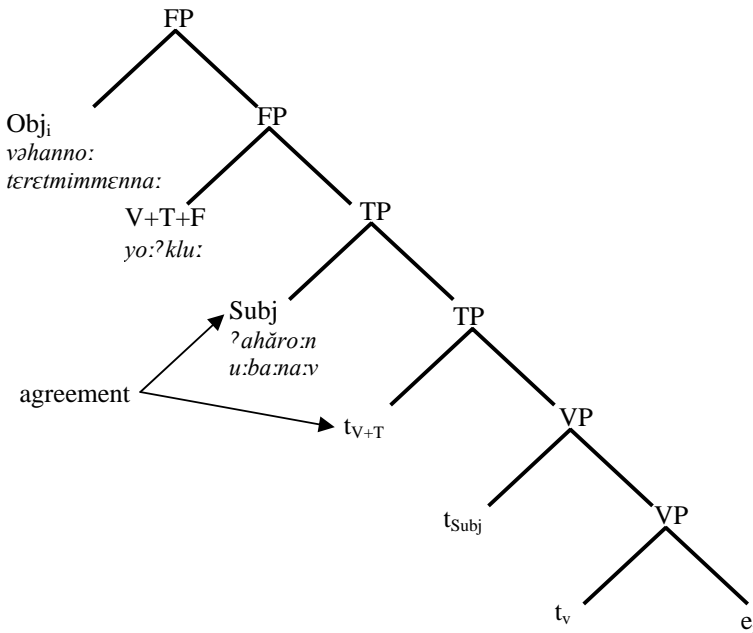


Finally, Doron accounts for full agreement in VS clauses (which is very common in BH) by noting that this occurs when some constituent—any constituent—precedes the V, e.g., OVS clauses: “the raising of V to a functional projection F beyond T is possible only if some constituent—e.g., the object—occupies specifier of TP” (2000:92). Thus, the clause in (15), illustrated in (16), represents an SVO

derivation based on the structure in (14) that then experiences the raising of the verb out of T to a functional head F. The T-to-F raising itself is triggered by the presence of the raising of the object to the specifier of F.

- (15) *və-han-no:teret      mimmen-na:      yo:-ʔkl-u:      ʔahāro:n      u:-ba:n-av*  
 and-the-remainder   from-it            3M-will.eat-P    Aaron            and-sons-his  
 ‘and Aaron and his sons will eat what is left of it’ (Lev 6.9)

- (16) XVS Full Agreement in BH (Doron 2000, ex. [39])



In summary, Doron classifies BH as a VSO language that exhibits FCA in VSO clauses but full agreement in SVO clauses or in VSO clauses that exhibit the raising of the verb beyond T. The essential difference between languages, like BH and SA,

that allow FCA, and those that do not, like IH, depends on how the extended projection principle operates in each type.

Doron's analysis has two major weaknesses. First, if we accept Doron's analysis of the verbal form *vayyiqtol*, there are VS examples with conjoined subjects that exhibit full agreement, and unlike the data that Doron presents, these lack any sort of preverbal constituent, clitic, or anaphor. Examples like (17) should be prohibited, yet they exist.<sup>17</sup>

- (17) *va-y-ya-qhil-ur*                      *mo:fe: vəʔahāro:n ʔet haq-qa:ħal ʔel pəne: has-sa:laʃ*  
 and-C-3M-assembled-P              Moses              and-Aaron              ACCthe-assembly to  
 face.of the-rock  
 'and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock' (Num 20:10)

At this point I want to address Doron's treatment of the BH verbal form *va-y-yiqtol*, which occurs in many of her examples. The *va-y-yiqtol* verb is best taken as a complex morph that represents the fusion of three distinct elements: the Hebrew enclitic coordinating conjunction *va*,<sup>18</sup> a phonologically underspecified complementizer (manifested only in the gemination of the following consonant),

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<sup>17</sup> Doron notes that there are a "couple of apparent counterexamples" (2000:94, n. 10) and provides an ad hoc explanation for the one she cites, but these data cannot be so easily dismissed: Exod 16:17; 29:15; 30:19; Lev 8:18, 22; Num 20:10; 31:13; Josh 7:9; 8:15; Judg 8:12; 2 Sam 2:24; 1 Kgs 12:3; Isa 35:10; 42:11; 51:11; Jer 11:10; Ezek 4:17b; 1 Chr 24:2; 2 Chr 31:8. Moreover, if the presence of a preverbal constituent is irrelevant to the agreement phenomenon in BH, as my critique of Doron's inadequate treatment of both the *va-y-yiqtol* form and examples as in (18) demonstrates, then the following also become counter-examples to Doron's analysis: Gen 40:1; Exod 5:1; Lev 6:9; Josh 19:51; 1 Sam 31:7; Ezek 4:17a; Ps 18:13; Ezra 3:8; 8:25; Neh 3:6; 1 Chr 9:35-37; 10:7.

<sup>18</sup> It is unclear why Doron would categorize the coordinator *va-* (with allomorphs *və-*, *va-*, and *u-*) itself as a complementizer since, a rather promiscuous clitic, it conjoins XPs of all types. In other words, it appears that the distinguishes between the normal conjunction *va-* used at the phrasal level and a complementizer *va-* used at the clausal level, but the empirical justification for doing so is less than transparent.



and the prefix preterite verb (see Cook 2001:113-31).<sup>19</sup> Importantly, the assimilated complementizer triggers the T-to-C raising of the verb. So, for (18) I would take the assimilated complementizer as a qualifying “preverbal constituent,” which triggers the raising necessary for full agreement, which would seem to support Doron’s analysis for the full agreement in examples such as in (17). However, taking the complementizer as a trigger for V-raising then undermines Doron’s analysis of all *va-y-yiqtol* clauses that exhibit FCA (see her exx. [1], [13a, b, d, e, f, g], [36b]), as well as the VS PA examples like (2b) above.<sup>20</sup>

The second weakness of Doron’s analysis is that it does not account for, and in fact, prohibits, BH examples of the type illustrated in (18).

- (18) a. *yo:ʔab*      *va-ʔābi:ʕay*      *ʔax-iv*      *ra:dap*  
          Joab          and-Abishai      brother-his      pursued.3MS  
          *ʔaxäre:*      *ʕebaʕ*      *bən*      *bikri:*  
          after          Sheba          son.of      Bikri  
          ‘Joab and Abishai, his brother, pursued Sheba son of Bikri’ (2 Sam 20:10)

- b. *ha-ʔiff-a:*      *v-ilad-e:ha:*      *ti-hye:*      *la-ʔdome:ha:*  
          the-woman-3FS      and-children-MP-her      3F-will.be.s      to-master-her  
          ‘the woman and her children shall belong to her master’ (Exod 21:4)

<sup>19</sup> What the complementizer within the *va-y-yiqtol* was originally is unknown. For surveys of both classical and modern proposals regarding the history and semantics of this underspecified function word see L. McFall, *The Enigma of the Hebrew Verbal System: Solutions from Ewald to the Present Day* [Sheffield 1982], 217-18; B.K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, IN 1990], 544-45; W.R. Garr, ‘Driver’s Treatise and the Study of Hebrew: Then and Now’ [Preface to reprint of S.R. Driver’s *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some Other Syntactical Questions*. Grand Rapids, MI 1998], xviii-lxxxvi.)

<sup>20</sup> See Holmstedt 2002, chp. 3, for further discussion on the syntax of BH *va-y-yiqtol* clauses

- c. *tor-a:    ʔaxat u-miʃpat'    ʔexād yi-hye:    la-kem*  
 law-FS   one   and-ordinance.MS one   3M-will.be.s   to-you  
 'one law and one ordinance shall be for you' (Num 15:16)

Each example in (18) exhibits SV order but lacks full agreement. Yet, in Doron's analysis this should have motivated the T-to-F raising of the verb, resulting in full agreement.

Additionally, BH has VS FCA clauses in which the verb has clearly raised out of T. For instance, most modal clauses exhibit both VS order and full agreement, as in (19), which is why I take modal operators to be covert operators triggering T-to-F (or T-to-C) verb-raising (Holmstedt 2002, 2005, *fc*; cf. Cook 2001:134; DeCaen 1995).

- (19) *ta-dʃe:ʔ    ha-ʔares'    dʃeʃeʔ*  
 3F-let.sprout.s   the-earth.FS   grass  
 'Let the earth sprout grass' (Gen 1.11)

But if modality (or a modal operator) triggers V-raising, what about (20) and other examples like it, in which we have a VS modal clause that exhibits FCA?

- (20) *ye-s'e:ʔ    na:ʔ    ʔa:b-i:    və-ʔimm-i:    ʔittə-kem*  
 3M-let.exit.s   please   father.MS.my   and-mother.FS-my   with-you  
 'please let my father and mother go out with you' (1 Sam 22.3)

Granted, the type of examples presented in (18) and (20) constitutes a small subset of the already small (relative to the corpus) set of partial and first-conjunct agreement clauses in BH. Even so, unless we simply question the acceptability of such examples, an adequate account of agreement asymmetries must include them. Since Doron's EPP solution does not account for all of the data, I will now turn to the analysis provided in Naudé 1999 to see if it fares better.

Naudé's primary concern is a subset of the conjoined subject data: conjoined subjects in which the first conjunct is pronominal. Although I have so far excluded

pronominal subjects in this study, it will be valuable to consider them briefly at this point. Consider the examples in (21).

- (21) a. *va-y-yor-ʔkl-ū va-y-yift-ū huʔ və-ha-ʔānāf-īm ʔāfer simm-o:*  
 and-C-3M-ate-P and-C-3M-drank-P he and-the-men-MP that with-him  
 ‘and (they) ate and (they) drank, he and the men that were with him’ (Gen 24:54)
- b. *və-nifmad-ti ʔāni: ū-bet-i*  
 and-shall.be.destroyed-1CS I and-house-my  
 ‘and (I) shall be destroyed, I and my household’ (Gen 34:30)
- c. *va-y-ya-ʕal huʔ və-ziqn-e: yiśra:ʔel lipne: ha-ʕam ha-ʕay*  
 and-C-3M-went.up.s he and-elders-MP.of Israel before the-people the-Ai  
 ‘and (he) went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people (to) Ai’ (Josh 8:10)
- d. *va-y-ya-kbe:d libb-o: huʔ va-ʕābād-av*  
 and-C-3M-hardened.s heart-his he and-servants-MP.his  
 ‘and (he) hardened his heart, he and his servants’ (Exod 9:34)
- e. *va-y-ye:s’e:ʔ ʕog melek hab-baʕʕan li-qra:ʔte-nu:*  
 and-C-3M-went.out.s Og king.of the-Bashan to-meet-us  
*huʔ və-kol ʕamm-o: lam-milxama:*  
 he and-al people-his for.the-battle  
 ‘and Og, the king of Bashan, went out to meet us, he and all his people, for battle’ (Deut 3:1)

Example (21a) exhibits full agreement between the plural verb and the postverbal conjoined subject, and importantly, demonstrates that the pronominal first conjunct does not dictate the agreement features of the verb. In contrast, examples (21b-d) exhibit what might be considered FCA. According to Naudé, though, the

type of construction illustrated in (21e) suggests a different analysis. In (21e) the overt subject DP ‘Og’ is later resumed by the pronoun ‘he’ in the conjoined phrase ‘he and all his people’. The conjoined phrase, he argues, cannot be the syntactic subject since that position is already filled by an overt DP, nor can it be right-dislocated, since it is positioned before another PP adjunct ‘for battle’. The phrase ‘he and all his people’ is instead “an adjunct that is generated in the position it occupies in overt syntax” (1999:91). By analogy with this type, he suggests that the conjoined ‘subject’ phrases in (21b-d) are also adjuncts instead of syntactic subject; the syntactic subject of each clause is a null subject *pro* (“little *pro*”), which is resumed by the first conjunct of the conjoined adjunct phrase.

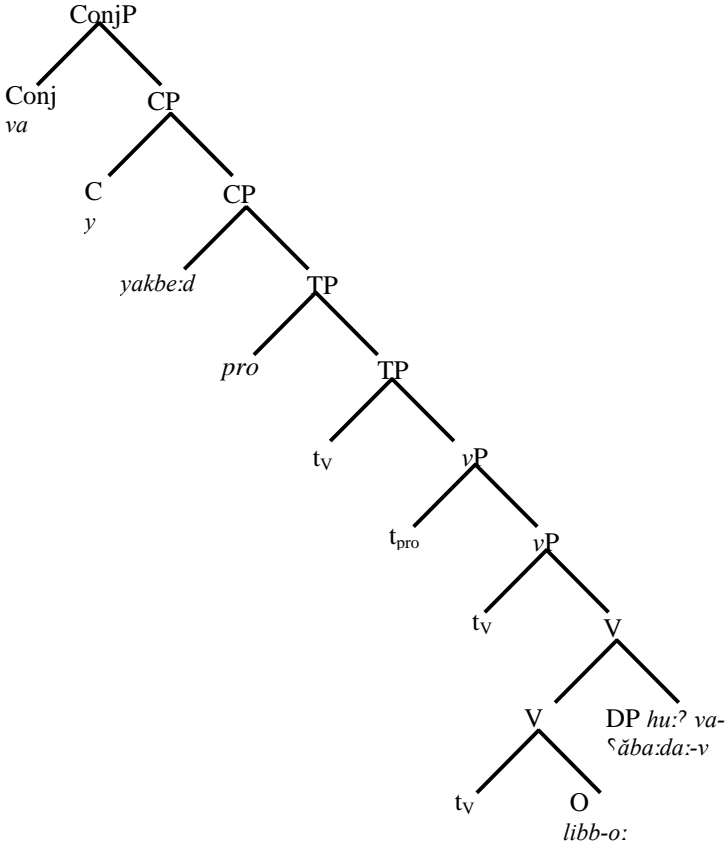
A brief word on *pro* in BH is necessary at this point. As Naudé has noted, BH is a prototypical example of a *pro*-drop language (Naudé 1991, 1993). The finite verbs are inflected with morphologically rich affixes (i.e., the verbal affixes are portmanteau morphs, carrying a bundle of person, number, and gender features); hence, subject pronouns are often not overtly present, they are allowed to “drop.” Rather, the null subject *pro* is present in these clauses to fulfill the EPP requirement and to check both person, gender, and number agreement and nominative Case features (see Haegeman 1994:19-25; 454-58; see Gutman, chp. 1). Accordingly, a great number of clauses in the BH corpus lack an overt subject DP, as in (22).

- (22) a. *va-y-ya-bo:ʔ-u*                      *ʔars'-a*                      *kənaʕsan*  
          and-C-3M-came-P   *pro*   land.of-to   Canaan  
          ‘and (they) came to the land of Canaan’ (Gen 12:5)
- b. *va-t-ta-har*                                      *va-t-teʔ-leʔ*                                      *ʔet*                      *qayin*  
          and-C-3F-conceived.s *pro*   and-C-3F-bore.s   *pro*   ACC   Cain  
          ‘and (she) conceived and (she) bore Cain’ (Gen 4:1)

The two examples in (22) make it clear both that an overt subject DP is lacking and that *pro* fulfills the requirement for a syntactic subject. I am not here concerned with *how* null subject *pro* is licensed and identified in BH, but simply that it is licensed and identified. What is salient is that *pro* is often connected to the

discourse. The BH examples provide support for Gutman's (1999, 2004) approach to the *pro* and discourse identification: in BH *pro* is used when its antecedent accessibility within the discourse is high, but the referring DP subject is used when the accessibility is low, while an overt pronoun is used for Topic or Focus. For instance, in the case of (22a), the masculine plural referent, Abram, Lot, and their families, is specified in the same verse immediately before the *pro*-drop clauses listed here; thus, this antecedent is extremely accessible. Similarly, in (22b) the antecedent of *pro* is the highly accessible DP *Eve*, the mother of Cain. (See Gutman 1999, 2004 for further discussion of the discourse identification of *pro*.)

We may now return to the syntactic analysis that Naudé proposes for conjoined subjects in BH. I have illustrated the basic structure of his proposal in (23), using example (20d) since it contains an overt object DP.

(23) Adjunction Analysis of Conjoined “Subject” Phrases in BH<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> I have slightly modified Naudé’s structural account of the adjunction. In addition to removing the “agreement” (AGR) projections I added the “light verb phrase” (vP) shell. Finally, rather than as an AGRSP adjunct I have taken the conjoined phrase “he and his servants” as a VP adjunct, which accounts better for the fact that we find the conjoined phrase both before and after objects and other adjuncts, such as PPs.

The association of agreement features with *pro* in cases with following conjoined-‘subject’ adjunct phrases is no different than in the simple *pro* drop clauses that we considered in (21). The *pro* carries whatever agreement features that allow the referent to be recovered from the discourse, which in the case of (21d = 23) is the Egyptian *Pharaoh* of the Exodus narrative.

### 3. Resolving First-Conjunct Agreement in Biblical Hebrew

It seems clear that a *pro*-and-adjunct analysis can account for clauses that have conjoined subjects with full DPs and yet show a verb that lacks full agreement with the conjoined DP, e.g., examples of what otherwise appear to be VS FCA in BH, as in (24).

- (24) a. *va-y-ya-ʕaś*                      *moʕfe*    *və-ʔahārom*    *ka-ʔäʕer*  
          and-C-3M-did.s *pro*    Moses    and-Aaron    like-REL  
          *s’ivva*                      *yhwh*    *ʔot-am*  
          commanded.3MS    Yhwh    ACC-them  
          ‘and Moses and Aaron did just as Yhwh had commanded them’ (Exod 7.6)

- b. *va-t-tə-dabber*                      *miryam*    *və-ʔahārom*    *bə-moʕfe*  
          and-C-3f-spoke-s *pro*    Miriam    and-Aaron    against-Moses  
          ‘and Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses’ (Num 12:1)

In each case, the singular verb agrees with the null subject *pro*, which itself carries agreement features that match its discourse antecedent’s features. So, for example, in the case of (24a) Moses is the addressee in Yhwh’s speech in Exod 7:1-5. Although Aaron is mentioned (vv. 1-2) and even included in a pronominal reference (v. 4), he is not a participant in the reported speech of the narrative at this point. Thus, the *pro* subject in (24a) has as its antecedent Moses, a 3MS DP,

while the adjunct phrase serves to add Aaron as a secondary agent; this, in turn, licenses the plural anaphora in the following constituent ‘ACC-them’. For (24b) the discourse indicates that the 3FS *pro* anticipates Miriam’s prominence in the minor rebellion against Moses: while it is both Aaron and Miriam who have turned against Moses, for some unexplained reason Miriam is assigned greater blame and is thus the only one of the two who is afflicted with a skin disease. She is the salient agent/patient in this stretch of discourse and she, therefore, is the antecedent within the discourse that identifies the *pro* in (24b).

Of the remaining types of ‘conjoined-subject’ constructions in BH that lack full agreement, the structurally most transparent are those like (25).

- (25) *va-yə-hi: l-o: s’o:ʔn u-ba:qar va-xəmo:r-im*  
 and-C-3M-was.s *pro* to-him sheep and-cattle and-he asses-MP  
*va-ʕābad-im u-ʕəpax-ot va-ʔātom-ot u-gəmall-im*  
 and-servants-MP and-maids-FP and-she asses-FP and-camels-MP  
 ‘and there was to him (i.e., he had) sheep and cattle and he asses and  
 servants and maids and she asses and camels’ (Gen 12:16)

These examples are best understood as expletive constructions, much like the IH examples above in (10e-f). In these expletive constructions *pro* is merged directly into Spec,TP in order to fulfill the requirement for a structural subject (i.e., the EPP). Further, expletive *pro* only requires licensing and not identification, and thus there is no need for a recoverable referent within the discourse. However, the fact that BH exhibits an approximately equal number of 3MS and 3MP features on the ‘to be’ verb suggests that there may exist some sort of informal, cataphoric number relation between the subject DP in the VP and the expletive *pro*.<sup>30</sup> Note that the acceptability of both singular and plural expletive construction in BH contrasts with the facts of IH indicated in Doron 2000.

<sup>30</sup> For 3MS expletive constructions, see Gen 12:16; 26:14; 30:43; 32:6; Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7; 18:2; 25:13, 14, 15; 1 Kgs 11:3; 1 Chr 24:28. For 3MP expletive constructions, see Lev 25:8; Num 26:33; Josh 17:3; Jer 16:2; Ezek 19:11; Hos 8:11; 1 Chr 23:22.



Finally, the examples in (26) requires some explanation: SV clauses with conjoined subjects and singular verbs (see above, n. 7, for a list of examples).

- (26) a. *yo:ʔab*      *va-ʔābiʃay*      *ʔax-iv*      *raʔdap*  
 Joab      and-Abishai      brother-his      pursued.3MS  
*ʔaxāre:*    *ʃebaʃ*      *bən*      *bikri:*  
 after      Sheba      son.of    Bikri  
 ‘Joab and Abishai, his brother, pursued Sheba son of Bikri’ (2 Sam 20:10)

- b. *to:r-a:*    *ʔaxat u-miʃpatʻ*      *ʔexād*    *yi-hye:*      *la-kəm*  
 law-FS    one    and-ordinance.MS    one      3M-will.be.s    to-you  
 ‘one law and one ordinance shall be for you’ (Num 15:16)

- c. *ha-ʔiff-a:*      *v-ilad-e-ha:*      *ti-hye:*      *la-ʔdome-ha:*  
 the-woman-3FS    and-children-MP-her    3F-will.be.s    to-master-her  
 ‘the woman and her children shall belong to her master’ (Exod 21:4)

In each case the verb following the conjoined subject shows a number mismatch, violating typical coordination resolution rules (e.g., singular + singular = plural) (Corbett 2006, chp. 8). Example (26c), with a feminine verb, also exhibits a mismatch with the *expected* gender resolution (i.e., feminine + masculine = masculine).<sup>31</sup> Most of the examples have 3MS verbs, even if one of the conjoined

<sup>31</sup> Similar examples, in which number *and* gender agreement appear to be lacking, are 2 Kgs 4:7 (‘you [2FS] and your sons [3MP] will live [2FS]’) and Jer 49:24 (‘distress [3FS] and labor pains [3MP] seized [3FS] her’). One example lacks number and *person* agreement: in Esth 4:16 the conjoined subject ‘I and my maids’ (i.e., 1CS + 3FP) is followed by a 1CS verb ‘(I) will fast’ (instead of the expected 1CP ‘(we) will fast’). For some of these examples, the discourse context is suggestive. For example, the context of Jer 49:24 includes (1) the discourse topic (Damascus, = FS), (2) three preceding 3FS verbs, and (3) the FS substantive participle in the following comparative PP. Thus, it is plausible that these factors have influenced the number features of the 3FS verb in Jer 49:24. Some support for this comes from statements like *Toddlers and banana cream pie is a bad combination*, in which the singular verb *is* appears to have been influenced by the singular

constituents is feminine,<sup>32</sup> and are thus similar to (26a-b), not (26c). It is tempting to take all of these, as with (24), as *pro* clauses, with the added twist of the fronting of the conjoined-‘subject’ adjunct phrase into a Topic or Focus position. Some of the conjoined subject phrases consist of abstract nouns and thus even the combination of two might not result in a plural entity.<sup>33</sup> Finally, it is possible that in some of the conjoined phrases, for whatever reasons (whether discourse, e.g., presenting both conjuncts as a unit, or literary, e.g., hendiadys), the semantically plural conjunct phrase functions syntactically as a set or group noun with singular agreement features. Clearly, this small data set presents numerous complexities and they warrant further study.

## 4. Conclusion

At first glance, BH appears to exhibit agreement asymmetries that pattern like SA, but the similarity of the BH and SA phenomena is superficial. Thus, none of the proposals to account for FCA in SA and other languages adequately accounts for the full range of BH data. Instead, the null pronoun/*pro*-analysis, which has been largely discounted for the varieties of Arabic that exhibit FCA, provides a framework that can incorporate both the VS FCA-appearing examples and the VS full agreement examples: *pro* carries the agreement features assigned to it by the immediate discourse and these are the features checked against the verb. Therefore, FCA in BH is simply a (mis)perceived rather than a real linguistic phenomenon.

One major implication of the current analysis is the disassociation of agreement asymmetries in BH from word order variation. Whereas Doron used what appeared to be FCA in BH to argue that BH was a VSO language, in contrast to SVO IH, the BH data show no sensitivity to word order. On the contrary, the data suggest that BH is structurally similar to IH except that it exhibits a greater flexibility within the

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predicate *a bad combination* (I am grateful to Peter Hallman for this observation by way of personal communication). Admittedly, however, such an explanation does not adequately describe all of the examples.

<sup>32</sup> Lev 27:10, 33; 2 Kgs 20:19; Ezek 45:10; Ps 55:6; Prov 27:9; 29:15; Qoh 9:11; Esth 4:14.

<sup>33</sup> I am indebted to Edit Doron (personal communication) for this observation.

same basic syntax. In fact, I have argued that BH is an SVO language, which, much like IH, exhibits V2 tendencies (see Holmstedt 2002, f.c.), and we can now remove the fact of agreement asymmetries in BH as an obstacle to an SVO classification.

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